



# Nova Scotia

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## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Fleur de Sel (p62)
- ➔ Front & Central (p75)
- ➔ Wild Caraway (p82)
- ➔ Lobster Pound & Moore (p96)
- ➔ Lobster suppers (at town halls and churches)

## Best Places to Stay

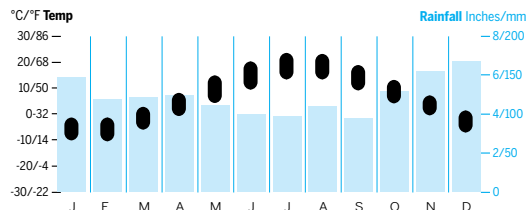
- ➔ Waverley Inn (p50)
- ➔ Desbarres Manor (p99)
- ➔ Lightkeeper's Kitchen & Guest House (p81)
- ➔ Cranberry Cove Inn (p98)
- ➔ Digby Backpackers Hostel (p70)

## Why Go?

If provinces were mother Canada's children, Nova Scotia would be the cute kid who charms the world with her lupine-studded fields, gingerbread-like houses, picture-perfect lighthouses and lightly lapping waves on sandy shores. But then you put her in a hockey rink or perhaps a fishing boat in a strong gale and another side comes out. Good looks aside, this near island and her residents are tough, resourceful and bad ass; most enjoy a drink, a song, a dance and a new face to share it with. If it's nature you're seeking, it's easy to discover empty coastal beach trails and wilderness paths through mixed forest to vistas with briny breezes. For something more cosmopolitan, head to Halifax for world-class dining and a rocking music scene.

## When to Go

### Halifax



**Jun–Aug** Wildflowers carpet the country while whales come close to feed.

**Sep & Oct** Trees aflame with golds and reds provide a backdrop to fall music festivals.

**Aug–Nov** Put on a thick wetsuit, hood and booties to surf icy hurricane swells.

## History

From time immemorial, the Mi'kmaq First Nation lived throughout present-day Nova Scotia. When the French established the first European settlement at Port Royal (today's Annapolis Royal) in 1605, Grand Chief Membertou offered them hospitality and became a frequent guest of Samuel de Champlain.

That close relationship with the French led to considerable suspicions by the British after they gained control of Nova Scotia, and rewards were offered for Mi'kmaw scalps. Starting in 1755, most French-speaking Acadians were deported to Louisiana (where they became Cajuns) and elsewhere for refusing to swear allegiance to the British Crown.

Nova Scotia was repopulated by some 35,000 United Empire Loyalists retreating from the American Revolution, including a small number of African slaves owned by Loyalists and also freed black Loyalists. New England planters settled other communities and, starting in 1773, waves of Highland Scots arrived in northern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Island.

Most Nova Scotians trace their ancestry to the British Isles, as a look at the lengthy 'Mac' and 'Mc' sections of the phone book easily confirms. Acadians who managed to return from Louisiana after 1764 found their lands in the Annapolis Valley occupied. They settled instead along the French Shore between Yarmouth and Digby and, on Cape Breton Island, around Chéticamp and on Isle Madame. Today Acadians make up some 18% of the population, though not as many actually speak French. African Nova Scotians make up about 4% of the population. There are approximately 20,000 Mi'kmaq in 18 different communities concentrated around Truro and Bras d'Or Lake on Cape Breton Island.

## Local Culture

With nearly 8000km of coastline, Nova Scotia has a culture that revolves around the sea. Historically, it has been a hard-working region of coal mines and fisheries. The current culture is still very blue collar but, with the decline of the primary industries, many young Nova Scotians are forced to leave their province in search of work.

Perhaps because of the long winters and hard-working days, an enormous number of Nova Scotians play music. Family get-

togethers, particularly Acadian and Scottish, consist of strumming, fiddling, foot-tapping and dancing.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

Most flights go to/from Halifax, but there's also an international airport in Sydney on Cape Breton Island. Airlines include **Air Canada** ([www.aircanada.com](http://www.aircanada.com)), **Westjet** ([www.westjet.com](http://www.westjet.com)), **United** ([www.united.ca](http://www.united.ca)), **Delta** ([www.delta.com](http://www.delta.com)) and **Iceland Air** ([www.icelandair.ca](http://www.icelandair.ca)). There are multiple flights daily between Halifax and cities such as Toronto, Montréal, Ottawa, Saint John, Moncton and Boston (Massachusetts). In summer and fall there are direct flights to London and Iceland.

### BUS

Maritime Bus (p267) provides a bus service through the Maritimes and connects with **Orleans Express** ([www.oriansexpress.com](http://www.oriansexpress.com)) buses from Québec. From Halifax, destinations include Charlottetown (\$58.25, 5½ hours, two daily) and Moncton (\$49, four hours, three daily).

Contactable through Maritime Bus, several shuttles service the rest of the province.

### BOAT

#### New Brunswick

**Bay Ferries** (☎ 888-249-7245; [www.bayferries.com](http://www.bayferries.com); adult/child/car/bicycle \$43/28/81/10) has a three-hour trip from Saint John in New Brunswick to Digby. Off-season discounts and various packages are available.

#### Newfoundland

**Marine Atlantic** (☎ 800-341-7981; [www.marine-atlantic.ca](http://www.marine-atlantic.ca)) operates ferries year-round to Port aux Basques in Newfoundland from North Sydney (adult/child/car \$42/20/109). Daytime crossings take between five and six hours, and overnight crossings take about seven hours. Cabins and reclining chairs cost extra.

In summer, you can opt for a 14-hour ferry ride (adult/child/car \$112/54/225) to Argentia on Newfoundland's east coast. Reservations are required for either trip.

## NOVA SCOTIA FAST FACTS

- ➔ Population: 921,727
- ➔ Area: 55,491 sq km
- ➔ Capital: Halifax
- ➔ Quirky fact: Has the only tidal power plant in the western hemisphere